In the Claims

1-24 (canceled).

25 (new). A method for treating and/or preventing a fibrotic disease comprising administering to a patient in need thereof an effective amount of a composition, optionally together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein said composition is a:

1) polypeptide is selected from the group consisting of:

a) a polypeptide as set forth in any of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 7, or SEQ ID NO: 10;

b) a histidine tag form of the polypeptides whose sequences are recited in SEQ ID NO: 2 (SEQ ID NO: 3) or SEQ ID NO: 5 (SEQ ID NO: 6) or SEQ ID NO: 7 (SEQ ID NO: 8) or SEQ ID NO: 10 (SEQ ID NO: 11);

c) a polypeptide comprising SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 10 or SEQ ID NO: 11;

d) a mutein of any of (a) to (c), wherein the amino acid sequence has at least 40% or 50% or 60% or 70% or 80% or 90% identity to at least one of the sequences in (a) to (c);

e) a mutein of any of (a) to (c) wherein any changes in the amino acid sequence of said mutein are conservative amino acid substitutions to the amino acid sequences in (a) to (c);

f) a salt or an isoform, fusion protein, functional derivative, active fraction or circularly permutated derivative of any of (a) to (e); or

2) or nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide as set forth in any of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 10 or SEQ ID NO: 11 and comprising a nucleic acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

a) a nucleic acid sequence as set forth in any of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 4, or SEQ ID NO: 9;

b) a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes to the complement of the nucleic acid sequence of (a) under moderately stringent conditions or under highly stringent conditions;

c) a nucleic acid sequence of any of (a) or (b) wherein said nucleic acid sequence encodes an amino acid sequence having conservative amino acid substitutions to the amino acid sequences in SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 10 or SEQ ID NO: 11.

26 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the fibrotic disease is a connective tissue disease, lung fibrosis or liver fibrosis.

27 (new). The method according to claim 26, wherein the connective tissue disease is scleroderma.

28 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the polypeptide is glycosylated at one or more sites.

29 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the fusion protein comprises an immunoglobulin (Ig) fusion.

30 (new). The method according to claim 29, wherein the Ig fusion is an Fc fusion.

31 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the functional derivative comprises at least one moiety attached to one or more functional groups, which occur as one or more side chains on the amino acid residues.

32 (new). The method according to claim 30, wherein the moiety is a polyethylene moiety.

33 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the nucleic acid molecule is comprised in an expression vector.

34 (new). The method according to claim 33, wherein the vector is a gene therapy vector.

35 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the composition further comprises osteoprotegerin.

36 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the composition further comprises an interferon.

37 (new). The method according to claim 36, wherein the interferon is interferon-β.

38 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein the composition further comprises a Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) antagonist for simultaneous, sequential, or separate use.

39 (new). The method according to claim 38, wherein the TNF antagonist is TBPI and/or TBPII.

40 (new). The method according to claim 27, wherein the composition further comprises an anti-scleroderma agent.

41 (new). The method according to claim 40, wherein the anti-scleroderma agent is selected from the group consisting of halofuginone, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, proton pump inhibitors, NSAIDs such as ibuprofen, COX-inhibitors, corticosteroids such as

prednisone, tetracycline, pentoxifylline, bucillamine, geranylgeranyl transferase inhibitors, rotterlin, prolyl-4-hydroxlase inhibitors, c-proteinase inhibitors, lysyl-oxidase inhibitors, relaxin, halofuginone, prostaglandins, prostacyclins, endothelin-1, nitric oxide, angiotensin II inhibitors, interleukin-10, interleukin-8, leukotriene B4, ursodeoxycholic acid, anti-oxidants or SARP-1.

42 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein a composition comprising osteoprotegerin is administered to said patient simultaneously, sequentially, or separately.

43 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein a composition comprising an interferon is administered to said patient simultaneously, sequentially, or separately.

44 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein a composition comprising a TNF antagonist is administered to said patient simultaneously, sequentially or separately.

45 (new). The method according to claim 25, wherein an anti-scleroderma agent is administered to said patient simultaneously, sequentially or separately.